1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
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and captured many children and cattle, a feat which brought the Government down the Pibor, thereby closing hostilities. Many evidences show that at one time the Anuak extended far westward of their present distribution and were displaced from these sites, or assimilated, by the Nuer.

The other peoples with whom Nuer come into contact may be mentioned very briefly as their interrelations have little political importance. Another south-eastern neighbour is the Beir (Murle) people. As far as I am aware the Nuer did not raid them often and those few who know something of them respect them as devoted herdsmen. To the north-east of Nuerland the Gaajak have for several decades had relations with the Galla of Ethiopia. These appear to have been peaceful and there was a certain amount of trade between the two peoples. Absence of friction may be attributed largely to the corridor of death that divides them, for when the Galla descend from their plateau they quickly succomb to malaria while any attempt on the part of the Nuer to move eastwards is defeated by the tsetse belt that runs along the foot-hills. The Gaajak raided the Burun and Koma (both often referred to vaguely as 'Burun') for captives, and they were too small in numbers and too unorganized to resist or retaliate. To the north-west the Jikany, Leek, and Bul tribes occasionally raided the Arabs and the communities of the Nuba Mountains; and, to judge from a statement by Jules Poncet, the trouble over water and grazing in the dry season that occurs to-day between Nuer and Arabs has long occurred.[1]

The Arab slavers and ivory traders, who caused so much misery and destruction among the peoples of the Southern Sudan after the conquest of the Northern Sudan by Muhammad Ali in 1821, very little inconvenienced the Nuer. They sometimes pillaged riverside villages, but I know of no record of their having penetrated far inland, and it was only the more accessible sections of the Zeraf River tribes that appear to have suffered to any extent from their depredations. I do not believe that anywhere were the Nuer deeply affected by Arab contact.[2] The Egyptian Government and, later, the Mahdist Government, which were supposed to be in control of the Sudan from 1821 to the end of the century, in no way administered the Nuer or exercised control over them from the riverside posts they established on the fringes of their country.

[1] Poncet, op. cit., p. 25.

[2] I find myself unable to accept Casati's statement of the position (op. cit., vol. i, p. 38), but consider that greater reliance should be placed on the opinion of other authorities. See Romolo Gessi's letter to the Editor of *Esploratore* in 1880 (op. cit., p. xx), and Lejean's report from Khartoum in 1860 (op. cit., p. 215).

857 for her future. She must do as they say or pay for her
573 refusal by beatings from them. Her lot is not a pleasant one if her desires conflict with the plans of her father or brothers.

●164 If she has been a victim of that dreadful tropical disease, yaws, and has any ulcer caused by it, her brothers may take her to the nearest medical aid—either to the
[743] Government or mission clinic—and seek healing for her, for they will be at a decided disadvantage in obtaining the marriage price they seek if their sister is still suffering from this disease and has unhealed ulcers.

Or she may have trachoma and may have suffered for years from trichiasis, and now they seek medical and surgical aid for this. What man will want a half-blind wife or be willing to pay any reasonable number of cattle for her? But when these physical defects are remedied, they may hope to get the usual number of cattle for her, and that, to them, is the major point.

593 Their sister must be physically able to bear a living,
583 healthy child and regain her own health. Or, if she fail repeatedly in the first point or possibly fails to survive the ordeal of child-birth herself, her husband and his people may, and practically always do, ask for the return of the cattle which they paid as the marriage price.

So it is worth their while to invest the price of a sheep or two in securing physical health for their sister in order that she may bring them a greater number of cattle, and that her physical condition may not cause them to have to return the cattle they have received for her.

Her lot may be a most unhappy one if the man she loves has not the number of cattle her people desire or if they wish her to marry some one else. But if her health is good and her desires in regard to her future husband coincide with those of her family, her lot is a happy one.

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Chapter Six

DISEASE, DEATH AND BURIAL

DISEASES AND THEIR REMEDIES

PROBABLY the greatest cause of physical distress is the tropical disease which is commonly called yaws. It is prevalent throughout a large section of Nuerland, although it has not as yet invaded the Lau country. 164 ●

This disease is characterized at the onset by aching in the muscles and joints, then lesions may form over various parts of the body. The mucous membrane of the mouth and nose becomes inflamed. Large ulcers may form on the limbs; when they do, the aching in muscles and joints usually stops. The bridge of the nose may be destroyed by inflammation.

Yaws is spread by contact with the discharges of the body of the person affected or discharges from the ulcers. It is not of syphilitic origin.

Sometimes the ulcers are quite large and deep; four to eight inches of tissue may be involved. Others, of course, are smaller.

The Nuer tries various treatments which have been recommended to him by his elders. Certain leaves may be tied around the neck, a massage with hot water may be given to relieve the aching muscles and joints. The ulcer may be scraped with a shell, the edge of the shell having been previously sharpened. If a kernel forms in the groin due to an ulcer on the leg, a special grass is tied around the ankle to relieve it. The disease may wear itself out in time without medical care. 757

The Government doctors have trained some natives to give the intravenous injections of the drug which is used to eradicate this disease. These native men usually accompany the District Commissioners on their rounds 757 759 651

[p. 47]

757 It is surprising how quickly the ulcers respond to treatment at first. Later, when they are partly healed, the process seems to be slower, an ulcer may persist in being almost but not quite well for some time. Scar tissue breaks down easily, and the bare Nuer limb gets many a scratch and bruise which tend to cause a recurrence of the sore.

[302] When a man is downcast because a sore is slow in healing, he may bind his hair closely to the head by sewing it with cotton thread until it has the effect of a hair-net. He may wear his hair like this until his cause of distress of mind and sorrow of heart is relieved. This in itself explains to those who see him that there is a reason why he is not adorning his body, and that he is not careless about his personal appearance without cause.

One attack of yaws does not render a man immune. Of course, those who have had no complete cure of the first attack are specially subject to a recurrence of this disease.

● 164 Leprosy is rare among the Nuer although neighbouring tribes are subject to it.

Trachoma probably causes more trouble in Nuerland than any other disease with the exception of yaws. It is so widespread, and is the cause of much partial and total loss of sight. Many have trichiasis, but when, as in the past, there was a doctor at Nasser many were relieved of this affliction by operation. At the Government hospital at Malakal, both in the past and in the present, relief was, and is, offered to all who come.

[136] Flies are so numerous in this land that they have a very active part in the spread of disease.

Amoebic dysentery also takes its toll of life and weakens the people, although it is not as prevalent as some other diseases.

164 757 Pneumonia is hard to cope with in this land, and is much dreaded. As soon as the Nuer thinks that he has pneumonia he refuses to take medicine, asserting that if a victim of pneumonia takes medicine, the remedy will drive the disease all over the body instead of just letting it stay in the lungs. So the patient sits in the sunshine and the usual precautions are taken to guard him from those who might cast the evil eye upon him. Hot milk is given him to drink, if milk is obtainable. But he spends his nights shut up in a windowless house, the door being shut also, and possibly a small fire within for warmth. Many die, but some cases, even those who have had haemorrhages, have lived.

752 Sometimes when empyema follows pneumonia another Nuer will operate on the patient, opening up the pleural cavity in order to let the pus out. He may even cut the rib. The Nuer give you the name of the tree from which a twig may be cut in order to splice the rib. But I know of no one who has survived this operation. The patient is forcibly held down while this operation is in progress as they have no anaesthetics.

164 753 Various other diseases of more or less importance may be found. Cases of what they fear is a severe stomach disorder may eventually be found to be simply due to their fear of a curse.

164 The Nuer dread smallpox; when there is any danger of an epidemic of it they are quite anxious to be vaccinated. Smallpox is usually virulent in this country, and their dread of it is justified by the fact that it takes a heavy toll of life.

Chicken-pox, measles, and mumps may also be found. I have not known of any scarlet fever or diphtheria. Tuberculosis of the lungs is rare, although tubercular bone cases may be found.

Syphilis is not common, and when found its origin

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may generally be traced to a source outside the Nuer. 164
The Nuer have a superstition that dreadful things may happen—the nose may rot away, the head may split down the back—if they contract syphilis. Probably this superstition more than anything else tends to keep them from contracting the disease.

Gonorrhea, like syphilis, is not very common. It, too, may not infrequently be traced to a source which has no connection with the Nuer.

Children and the aged often suffer from malnutrition 146
owing to their limited diet.

A Nuer child has the six central lower teeth removed 753
when he is about six or eight years old. They frequently 752
think that some illness the child has had is due to the teeth, 304
and so have them extracted. Even though there be no illness the teeth are removed while the child is little. There is no such thing in Nuerland as painless extraction of teeth, judging from the cries we have heard and sore mouths we have seen.

Broken bones are also not infrequent, tiny splints for 752
them are made out of cane stalk or some small twigs of a pliable wood. These are placed side by side and laced together, the splint thus formed being tied around the limb at the site of the broken bone.

Spear wounds are occasionally to be seen, but if they are the result of a fight, they are seldom brought to the clinic for medical treatment. The wound is cared for by the relatives of the injured person in the village so that the evil eye may not see the wound and retard its healing.

The art of the medicine man is often sought in order to 755
cure any disease that baffles ordinary treatment. He (or she, as the case may be, for women are also adepts at this art) may remove (?) various things from the throat and stomach, and thereby relieve (?) the cause of distress.

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755 They chant, they spit and blow upon the person. A sheep or an ox may be sacrificed. If the disease is persistent, more sacrifices are offered, more chanting is done. If successful in removing the cause of the disease, or even if the people are satisfied with what he has done, the medicine man usually receives a gift of a sheep or an ox for his services. But if the patient dies while under treatment the price paid is usually returned. The medicine men, or women, as the case may be, or those who are supposed to have a god in them, reap a good harvest in sheep and cattle from those who seek their services for relief from disease.

Medicine men usually wear the hair long and may wear a beard.

757 One common practice that is often resorted to for curative effect is bleeding. In case of a swelling or a bruise or muscular pain, many small cuts are made at the site of the pain in order to let the blood out and presumably the pain with it.

In cases of severe colds the chest is often cut in this way. When patients so treated go to the clinic for medical aid, it is often impossible to rub the chest with oils or apply poultices on account of the effect of such medicines on these little raw cuts.

[736] 164 Scorpions and snakes abound in Nuerland, and cause a great deal of suffering, but few die of snakebite.

The Nuer do not have much malaria. Occasionally one may see a few cases among them.

DEATH AND BURIAL

888 764 The Nuer are kind to their aged and usually respect their opinions, but death in Nuerland and the details of burial are gruesome. The climate of course necessitates quick burial, so as soon as life is extinct preparations must be made.

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641 651 cattle as they call it), they certainly ought not to object when the Nuer raid the Dinka and take their cattle.

641 The Nuers learn to trust the District Commissioner and to respect his decisions, even though they be averse to their cause. They quite often prefer having him to settle a case rather than their Nuer chief. And yet one of the most respected and best loved of District Commissioners was killed by a Nuer recently.

164 744 In the spring of 1929 an epidemic of what was at first thought to be smallpox was reported in several villages. There were no fatalities, which is very unusual in Nuerland, for smallpox is very virulent and takes a heavy toll of life. The Nuer is accordingly much afraid of this disease. A clinic asked the doctor at Malakal to send vaccine, which he did, and many were vaccinated. The fact that the Government had sent vaccine for them and wanted to help them made a great impression upon the Nuer. Thus they realized that the Government did have something they needed and wanted to give it to them.

000 In time they may learn that they not only need what others can give them, but that they need to make their contribution to the world and to life outside of their own tribe.

411 There are not many guns among the Nuer. They depend upon the spear as their weapon, and it is usually not far from its owner's side. From boyhood on they are adepts at using the spear.

177 In the winter of 1928–9 the District Commissioner who was stationed at Nasser as his head-quarters had three aeroplanes come to Nasser. They stayed three days, their pilots being his guests. He wanted his Nuer to see aeroplanes at close range. He invited the people to take rides in them—the object being to show them that, while the aeroplane could be used for war purposes, it might also be used in times of peace. His interpreter was persuaded